

the taxpayers are indirectly subsidizing.

So I think we have to pose some very serious questions to the Internal Revenue Service, and we have to look at all these different stretchings of the law. There is absolutely no question what the spirit of the law is. I think that we should not be stretching the spirit, but instead we should be upholding the spirit of the law in this body.

#### INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. GENE GREEN] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the minimum wage was increased 4 years ago. However, the purchasing power of that same \$4.25 has declined 40 percent due to inflation. A recent study shows that in 1968 the minimum wage had a purchasing power in 1995 dollars of \$6.49. There are arguments on both sides of this issue but allowing working Americans to work for a living wage is the best method to reform welfare.

If a worker puts in 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, their gross wage is just over \$8,800. For an average family in the 29th Congressional District of Texas which I represent they will be over \$3,500 below the poverty line. Add the maximum earned income tax credit and that family will be \$400 under the poverty line and eligible for welfare under many programs.

However, this same family, with a minimum wage increase to \$5.15 and their maximum earned income tax credit, will now be above the poverty level and will no longer have to be on welfare. If the Members on the other side wish to save on welfare, and wish people to work, increase the minimum wage so full-time workers will not be eligible for welfare.

The myth that the minimum wage is only paid to teenagers does not fit with the fact that over half of the minimum wage earners are 26 or older. Congress must act and allow working Americans to earn a living wage.

My Republican colleagues talk about "me-too-ism" from the White House on Republican proposals. My Republican colleagues should develop me-too-ism on reducing welfare by paying an increase in the minimum wage—me-too-ism is bipartisanship working. Let us see it work for working Americans.

#### GIVE WORKING AMERICANS A BREAK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized during morning business for 2 minutes.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, let me see if I get this straight: First the Republicans said we cannot raise the minimum wage because it would cost jobs. Well, that argument did not fly. We know that from the studies that have been done recently between New Jersey and Pennsylvania and New York, where those establishments along the border that did raise the minimum wage actually found increased employment. That argument did not fly.

So next the Speaker said we cannot raise the minimum wage because of the crisis in Mexico, as if 58 cents an hour should be our benchmark. That our wages in this country should be tagged to those in Mexico. That did not fly.

So now the Senate majority leader says that the only way we can raise the minimum wage is if we cut taxes on the wealthy investors first. The Republicans say that the only way we can help people who earn \$9,000 a year is by cutting taxes on those who make \$9,000 a day.

Mr. Speaker, give me a break. If the Republicans want to help their wealthy friends, fine. But we are not going to let you do it on the backs of working families in this country. It is time we give working Americans a break, not just the wealthiest in our society.

I urge my colleagues to support the minimum wage, which is a just, living wage, which will move people to work, off welfare, and give them the wherewithal and the sustenance and a living wage to care for their families and to move up into the middle class, where they can hopefully enjoy a better future for themselves and their family.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning business, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 11 a.m.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 26 minutes a.m.) the House stood in recess until 11 a.m.

□ 1100

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 11 a.m.

#### PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Ronald Christian, Office of the Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, in this moment of stillness, before the work of this day begins, we first acknowledge our daily dependency upon Your grace and Your care.

We seek guidance when we could so easily be led of the course of justice for all,

We ask for wisdom when our decisions could so quickly be driven by selfish desires,

We plead for mercy when our petty jealousies have caused a wedge to be driven between ourselves and others,

And, we pray for courage when, with feeble heart, we might easily give in to goals that are less than the best for our neighbors.

Oh God, in these words and for these moments, let us all be reminded again of Your presence with us and our responsibility to You,

And may our words and actions this day serve more Your majestic will and purpose, than our fleeting wants and wishes. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. GUTIERREZ] lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance?

Mr. GUTIERREZ led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### REPUBLICAN CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, our Contract With America states the following:

On the first day of Congress, a Republican House will: Force Congress to live under the same laws as everyone else; cut committee staffs by one-third; and cut the congressional budget.

We did all this on the first day.

It goes on to state that in the first 100 days, we will vote on the following items:

A balanced budget amendment—we have done this; unfunded mandates legislation—we have done this; line-item veto—we have done this.

Yet to be accomplished:

A new crime bill to stop violent criminals; welfare reform to encourage work, not dependence; family reinforcement to crack down on deadbeat dads and protect our children; tax cuts for families to lift Government's burden from middle-income Americans; national security restoration to protect our freedoms; Senior Citizens' Equity Act to allow our seniors to work without Government penalty; Government regulatory reform; commonsense legal reform to end frivolous lawsuits;